DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 217 085 UD 021 490

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TITLE Refugees and Sponsorship.
INSTITUTION National Council of the Churches of Christ of the United States of America, New York, NY. Church World Service.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 16p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adjustment (to Environment); *Church Programs; *Human Services; Land Settlement; *Planning; *Refugees; Religious Organizations; *Voluntary Agencies
IDENTIFIERS *Church World Service; *Sponsors

ABSTRACT

This booklet describes the refugee resettlement activities of Church World Service (CWS), and explains the process of refugee sponsorship that constitute a major CWS concern. CWS is a cooperative organization of churches that serve as the relief and development arm of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. The booklet reviews the development of the Immigration and Refugee Program of CWS; summarizes the resettlement program under which refugees from several countries were permitted to enter the United States since the end of World War II; describes the organizational structure and functional network of the CWS refugee program; and discusses the basic responsibilities of the sponsor in providing necessary support for refugees until they can provide for their own needs. Individuals or groups may become sponsors, and sponsorship responsibilities include helping refugees obtain employment and the skills necessary for employment; soliciting donations of goods and services; making housing arrangements; and helping refugees adjust to their new environment. The report further discusses the financial and organizational aspects of sponsorship and explores the theological basis for refugee concerns. A list of persons who may be contacted for information and assistance concerning refugee sponsorship is included. (Author/MJL)

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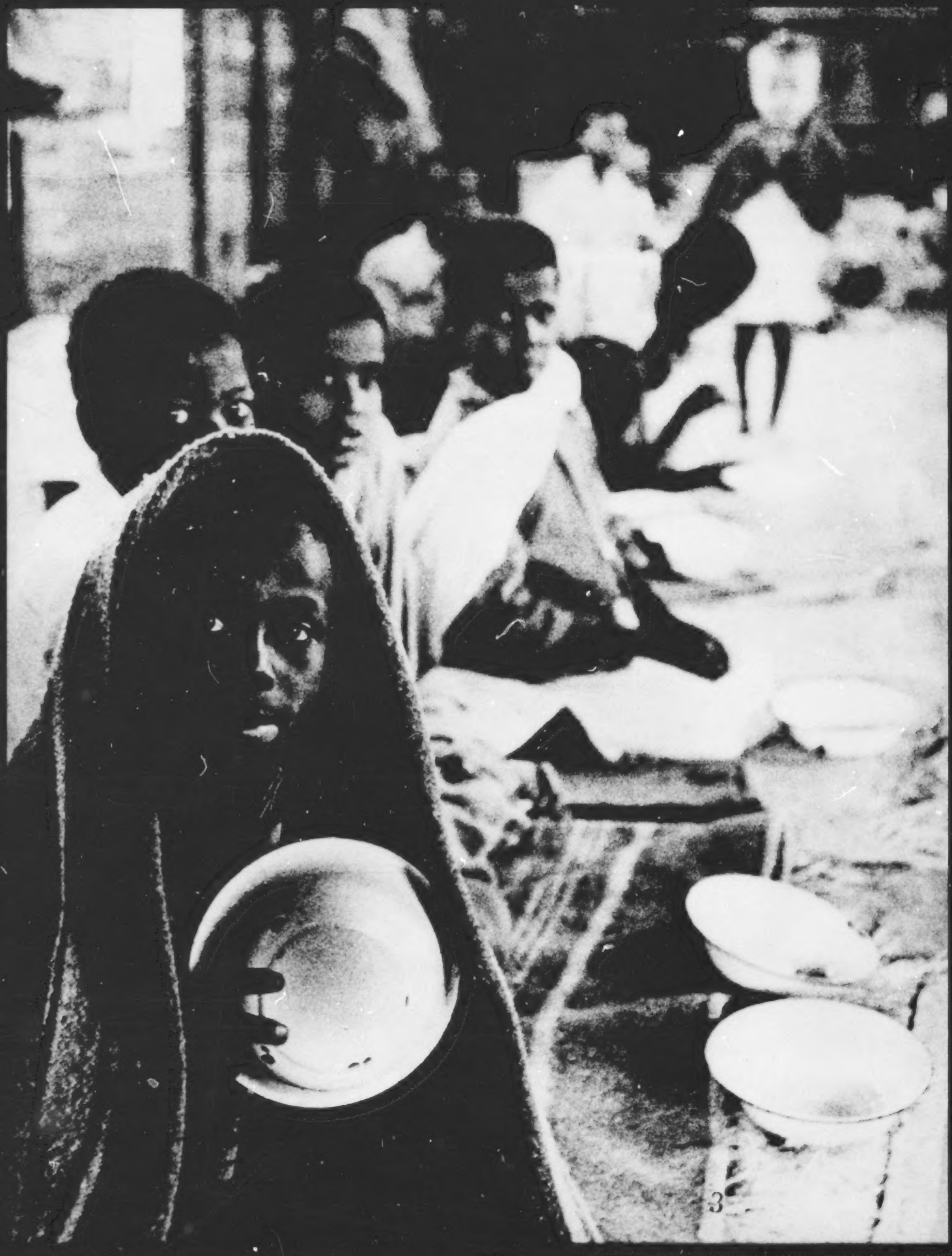

Refugees and Sponsorship
Church World Service

MAY 2 8 1981

The purpose of this booklet is two-fold: (1) to outline and describe Church World Service's work in refugee resettlement 1946-1980 and (2) to explain and describe the refugee sponsorship process.

Spring 1980

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Photo: Ethiopian Refugees in the Sudan, CWS.

Cover photo: Refugee Mother and Child in Sahel, Africa, CWS.

PART ONE CWS Policy and Programs in Refugee Resettlement: 1946-1980

I WHAT IS CHURCH WORLD SERVICE? BEGINNINGS: 1946

On May 4, 1946 the Federal Council of Churches, the Foreign Missions Conference and the American Committee of the World Council of Churches jointly established an organization which was given the name Church World Service (CWS). That action was followed by an invitation to denominations to appoint representatives to its governing body.

The decision to establish CWS was the result of a long history of the churches cooperating together in response to human suffering and was a conscious action to a commitment of cooperative ministry of assistance. There were 17 denominational members in CWS in 1946 and today over thirty. Of these, 15 are presently active in refugee resettlement.

Today CWS is a department of the Division of Overseas Ministries of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and is recognized as the relief and development arm of the Council. The CWS program is carried out by offices based on geographic as well as functional responsibilities: Africa, East Asia & the Pacific, Latin America & the Caribbean, Middle East & Europe, and Southern Asia; Family Life and Population Program, Material Resources, and the Immigration and Refugee Program.

Church World Service— Immigration and Refugee Program

The Immigration and Refugee Program of CWS was established at the organization's inception in 1946. Since that time through denominational resettlement offices CWS has assisted in the resettlement of over 300,000 refugees in the United States.

Two major resettlement efforts occurred in the early years of Church World Service. In 1948, as the war in China intensified, hundreds of thousands of refugees who feared the new regime fled the mainland. From 1950 to 1965 at least one million people went from mainland China to Hong Kong. Church World Service fed and clothed thousands of those refugees who were destitute.

While watching and aiding the refugees of China, CWS also viewed the division of Palestine. As battles raged between Jews and Arabs, 750,000 Palestinian refugees fled their country to find shelter in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Jewish Palestine. CWS responded to their needs by providing food, milk powder, medicines and vitamins. In Jerusalem alone, seven soup kitchens and four milk centers were established by CWS field workers.

When CWS was reorganized in 1950, the resettlement program turned over its refugee resettlement field operations to The Division of Inter Church Aid and Service to Refugees, World Council of Churches and by January 1, 1951 had become a reception and resettlement program within the United States.

A review and brief history of the refugee resettlement program of the member denominations' involvement can best be seen through a summary of the programs under which refugees were permitted to enter the country since the end of World War II.

Refugees from War-Torn Europe

From 1948 until 1953, three programs permitted refugees from war-torn Europe to enter this country: the Corporate Affidavit Program 1946, The Displaced Persons Act of 1948 and The Refugee Relief Act of 1953. CWS resettled 92,465 refugees through these programs.

Hungarian Refugees

CWS resettled 7,107 refugees from Hungary in 1956-1957.

Special Programs: 1950-1960

Five special programs in the late 1950's – 1960's permitted a number of refugees to find new homes in this country. CWS participation in these refugee programs was as follows: Public Law 85-316 (non-quota visas), 5,256; Dutch Indonesian Program 11,948; Fair Share Law of 1962 (UNHRC inspired) 3,214; Chinese Parole Program 1962, 2,445; Public Law 89-236 (which for the first time provided permanent legislation for the admission of up to 10,200 refugees per year).

Cuban Refugee Program 1960-1980

That refugee activity is not confined to a particular time span is aptly demonstrated by the Cuban refugee resettlement program. From December 1960 to the present political prisoner release and escapees by boat, January 1980, CWS has resettled almost 44,000 Cuban refugees.

Ugandan Refugees

Over 400 refugees from Uganda in 1973 were resettled by CWS.

Continuing Interest Refugee Groups

We have assisted individual families and groups from all over the globe through our participation in United States refugee resettlement programs such as Third Country Program (TCP) initiated in 1972, Latin American Program initiated in 1978, Public Law 89-236 and other special acts and programs.

Indochinese Refugees

Certainly no other refugee movement since the end of World War II has attracted such concern and world attention as the refugee situation in Southeast Asia following the end of the Indochina War. An estimated 1.5 million people fled Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia since 1975. Of the estimated 400,000 Indochinese refugees permitted to enter this country by July 1980, CWS will have resettled an estimated 18 to 20 percent of these refugees.

II RESETTLING REFUGEES THROUGH OUR CONSTITUENT DENOMINATIONS

CWS exists because of its constituent denominations. Those denominations active in refugee resettlement each have their own resettlement office and staff who initiate, follow-up and care for the sponsorships they develop. CWS works as the service and umbrella organization for its constituent denominations with the Immigration and Refugee Program Committee (IRPCOM) set up as the policy and program-making body composed of a designated refugee resettlement officer from each denomination.

Member denominations and IRPCOM collectively design program response, generate sponsorship (including education, recruitment and training), participate in immigration and refugee national

"Our refugee family has given us so much more than we have given them. When I look at them, I frequently think, there but for the grace of God, am I. I think that we in central Pennsylvania can identify more closely with the feeling of leaving your home. Many of the families in our church fled the area during the Three Mile Island situation."

Mrs. Rebecca Beck
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Columbia, Pa.

advocacy, as well as emergency assistance to refugees. The CWS Immigration and Refugee Program, New York, manages the work of its support units in New York City, its field office and functional programs. This office coordinates the following programs: processing cases, matching with sponsors, development of public information, advocacy, case information (through denominations), financial management, project planning and management, reception services at port of entry.

Together the denomination, CWS staff, sponsor and local community make refugee resettlement possible. (See Refugee Officer Contact List.)

III WHAT IS A VOLUNTARY AGENCY? (VOLAG)

Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program has been a member of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies (ACVA) since its creation in 1944. AVCA provides a forum for the joint planning, information exchange and advocacy work of other member voluntary agencies active in refugee resettlement.

Present membership of AVCA is over 40. The Board of Directors is composed of one representative from each member agency. The Council's activity is concentrated in three committees: Committee on Development Assistance, Committee on Material Resources, and Committee on Migration and Refugee Affairs. The Committee on Migration and Refugee Affairs provides a forum in which voluntary agencies can coordinate their refugee resettlement activities. Ten VOLAGs as well as selected states have been active in recent years in resettlement: U.S. Catholic Conference, Church World Service, American Council for National Service, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, International Rescue Committee, World Relief Refugee Services, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees, Tolstoy Foundation and YMCA.

Each VOLAG has a contract with the U.S. Department of State under which it receives a grant of money to support their work. Resettlement services include reception, orientation and employment counseling.

Photo: Refugee Child from Chile, CWS.

IV WHERE DO OUR REFUGEES COME FROM?

No refugee can enter the country unless approved for admission by our government (Department of State and the Immigration and Naturalization Service). There are two legal methods by which refugees can enter: conditional entry and parole. Conditional entry is limited yearly by number and geographic region. Parole has been used by the Attorney General, under his privilege in the Immigration and Nationality Act, Sec. 212(d)5 to permit refugee groups to enter this country. In the past this has been used primarily for Hungarians, Cubans, Ugandans and Indochinese.

A person becomes a refugee by leaving a country of residence and seeking asylum and assistance abroad. The refugee is placed in a transit camp in Europe, for example, which may operate under the auspices of The United Nations or the World Council of Churches. The refugee then waits for sponsorship offer. Sometimes the wait is painfully long. It is important to remember that no refugee can enter this country unless a sponsor is found for that refugee.

Indochinese Refugees Today

The refugee situation in Southeast Asia is somewhat different in organization. Refugees in Indochina are under the jurisdiction of the first asylum country, and turned over to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who is responsible for all physical aspects of camp maintenance. The UN often contracts with the host government or various other organizations to manage the camps and/or provide necessary services. Thus, although the refugee might never actually encounter a UN representative, his/her daily exis-

"Being a sponsor to an Ethiopian refugee and entering into that person's personality reminds one once again of the luxury, the bounty and the freedom that is ours as Americans."

Rev. Paul Gehris
Shermansdale, Pa.

tence in the camp is paid for by the United Nations. Funds to support this work are contributed to the UN by member governments. The U.S. Congress appropriates the contribution made by the United States.

While still in a refugee camp, the refugee is "processed," or interviewed for determining eligibility for emigration to another country. The U.S. has a processing procedure that involves the Joint Voluntary Agency Representative, the Refugee Officer of the Refugee Section of the American Embassy, and an Immigration and Naturalization Service Officer. (CWS staffs and operates the Malaysia Refugee Office.) This office gathers information from the refugees and assists in developing the "biodata forms" on each refugee family unit. The biographies help to determine the refugee's eligibility for acceptance to the U.S. and in locating a sponsor for resettlement.

Once the refugee is approved for entrance into the United States by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, a sponsor must be found for the refugee. ACVA coordinates the process by which the VOLAGS allocate "biodata forms" of approved refugees. Once a VOLAG provides the refugee with a sponsor, the refugee is an "assured, sponsored, approved refugee" and is ready for transport to the United States.

The State Department arranges with the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) for the transportation of the refugees. ICEM administers the final health screening and transportation from the first asylum country to the U.S. Funds to resettle a refugee in the U.S. are appropriated by the U.S. Congress and given to the State Department and HEW to administer.

Upon arriving in the United States, the refugee is introduced to his/her sponsor (a family, a church, or an organization) which has been secured for him/her by a VOLAG. The agencies,with the cooperation of the sponsor, assist the refugee through various resettlement services.

V CWS GLOBAL AND LOCAL WORKING PARTNERS

CWS works within a wide network of concerned refugee resettlement agencies and offices both internationally and domestically.

International

CWS is a member of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Commission on Interchurch Aid, Refugee and World Service (CICARWS), which is one of five commissions composing the WCC Programe Unit on Justice and Service. CICARWS exists to encourage (1) member countries to participate in refugee resettlement through churches, ecumenical agencies and international organizations and (2) protect the rights of refugees in areas of asylum and assistance. In doing this, it joins in the WCC's work in promoting conditions which will no longer produce refugees and will allow those who have left to return home.

Since its creation in 1948, WCC has recognized ministry to refugees as an essential expression of its Christian witness and solidarity. In 1979, the refugee department assisted refugee programs in 51 countries and maintained contact with counterparts in 11 countries on issues of refugee admission, reception and fund-raising. WCC has administrative responsibility for a Refugee Office in Athens, Rome and Vienna which service a wide variety of refugees from Eastern Europe, Middle East, Northern Africa and Indochina. Similar work goes on in some 35 other refugee service offices around the world. These offices however have been fully integrated into the local church ministry and are no longer regarded as offices of the WCC.

Domestic

CWS continues to seek new ways of informing constituent denominational membership and the wider church community of the needs of refugees and the process, roles and responsibilities of sponsorship. In addition to the existing denominational networks, CWS has utilized the national network of state and local ecumenical agencies, especially the State Council of Churches.

A network of over 20 Sponsorship Development offices has been established nationally through selected state and local ecumenical organizations. The functions of these offices are two-fold: (1) constituency education on refugee situations and needs and (2) develop sponsorship opportunities.

Refugee resettlement enhancement services are provided by a number of CWS-financed Ecumenical/Community Projects located in refugee-impacted areas around the country. The projects offer the following social services to the refugees in that community: employment services, ESL (English as a Second Language), vocational training, upgrading of employment, coordination of community and church efforts, bi-lingual and bi-cultural support services, assistance with changes of refugee status, sponsorship education and development and crisis counseling.

PART TWO
The Mechanics, Process and Goals of Refugee Sponsorship

VI WHAT IS SPONSORSHIP?

Sponsorship is a response to a need. Ultimately sponsorship and local resettlement are the responsibility of the sponsor. In considering involvement in resettlement a sponsor should prepare for a six month to two year commitment

Photo: Refugee fr.m Sahael, Africa, CWS.

PART TWO The Mechanics, Process and Goals of Refugee Sponsorship

which will vary depending on the language, vocational, and cultural adaptation skills of the refugees. Housing, food, clothing, understanding the American culture and the world of work, education, and transportation services are among the areas in which refugees require assistance. In general a congregational sponsorship group or committee which draws on the collective resources and specialties of congregational members is most effective. However, sponsorship by appropriate individuals and groups co-sponsoring with a local church are also encouraged.

The United States stands as a glimmer of hope for a new life to thousands of refugees. The key to this new life is sponsorship which offers not only a home, but the friendship and emotional support refugees so desperately need. The relationship between a sponsor and refugee is a mutal learning experience. The uniqueness of this relationship gives rise to the understanding that, cultural differences aside, people throughout the world share a common bond. The sponsor is a friend, enabler and advocate to assist a refugee family or individual to make a new start in a new land. The major objective in resettlement is to help the refugee become independent and self-sufficient. The sponsor should not assume the role of parent, but rather provide guidance and support to aid in the transition to self-sufficiency and self-respect.

Sponsorship requires a number of responsibilities:

A. To provide temporary housing with simple furnishings for the refugee or his family on arrival.

B. Help provide food, clothing, housewares and bedding — the basic necessities.

C. Help the refugee secure employment, introduce them into their new community, arrange for a language or skills training program, enroll children in school.

D. The most important — Provide a source of personal comfort, encouragement and support to the individual or family.

Sponsorship does not require:

A. The sponsor to pay for any travel expenses for the refugee to reach you. The refugee is provided with a non-

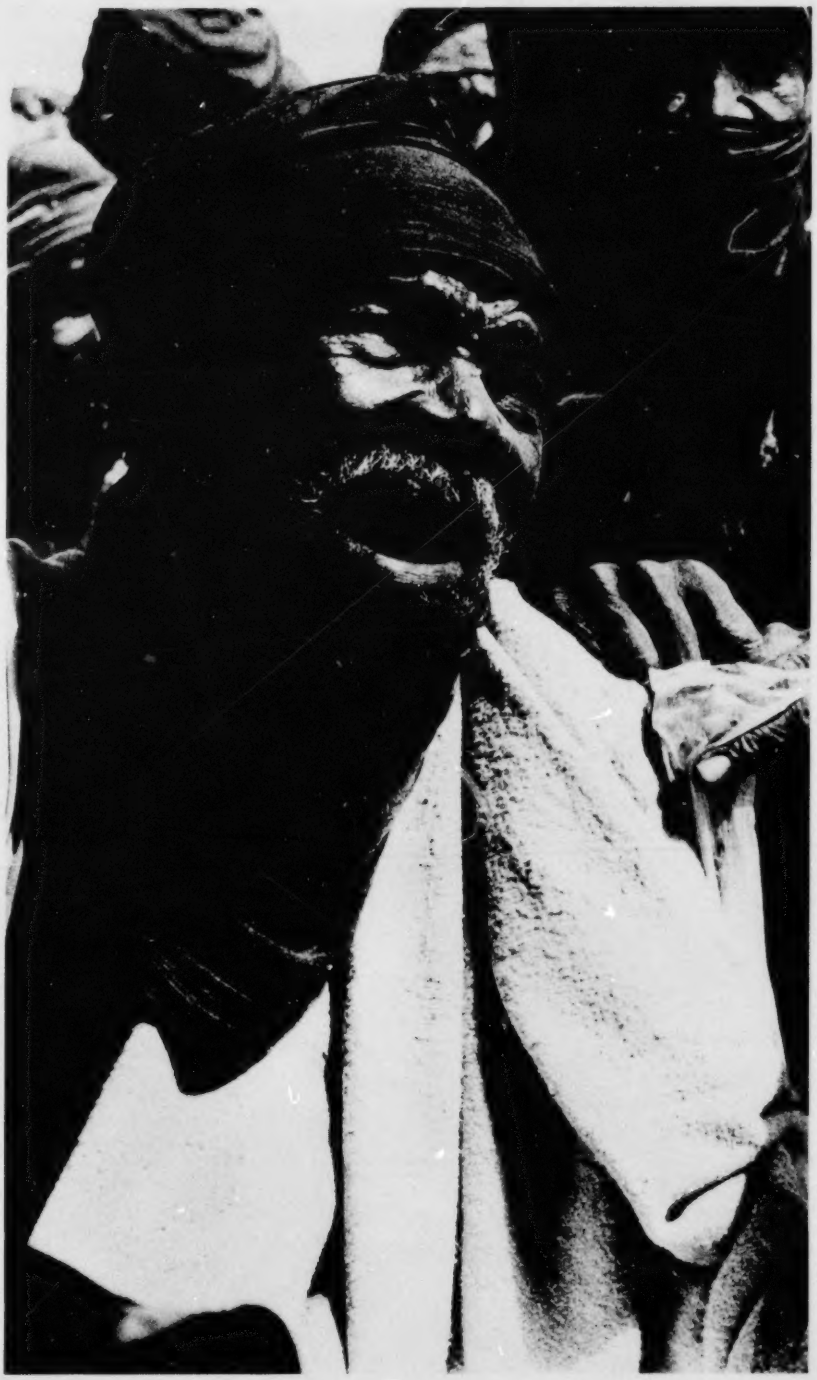

Photo: Ethiopian Refugee in Somalia, CWS.

interest loan to cover these expenses.

B. The sponsor to be liable for debts or bills the refugee may incur; in fact emergency cash assistance and medical assistance are available from your denomination and in most States through State Welfare Departments if absolutely necessary.

C. The sponsor to be responsible for the refugee's activities in the area of civil or criminal activities. Sponsorship is not a formal, legal commitment. However, the sponsor undertakes a clear moral commitment to help the refugee to the best of his ability.

VII GETTING ESTABLISHED

The basic commitment of sponsorship is to provide the support necessary until the refugees can provide for their own needs. You need to be aware of a number of resettlement concerns.

1. Employment

Jobs play a crucial role in the overall resettlement plan. A job for each employable family member should be secured as quickly as possible after arrival. A possible "rule of thumb" ascribed to by many denominations is: secure a job that any person can do whether or not the refugee speaks English (i.e., a job for which the expected duties can be demonstrated rather than described). Obviously, if the refugee has a good command of English and marketable job skills, employment consistent with these capabilities should be sought. Even relatively menial or entry-level jobs that often have little to do with the individual's background or training can have significant benefits, such as:

a. **Income** — this begins to provide at least a portion of the financial needs.

b. **Psychological** — employment is a concrete contribution by the refugee to his own resettlement and thus an important morale factor. It is a tangible move on the road to self-sufficiency that is vital in order to avoid the pitfalls of long term "parent-child dependency" that can develop. Self-respect is necessary for independence.

c. **Learning English** — through a job, the refugee will be exposed to English on a daily basis. On-the-job

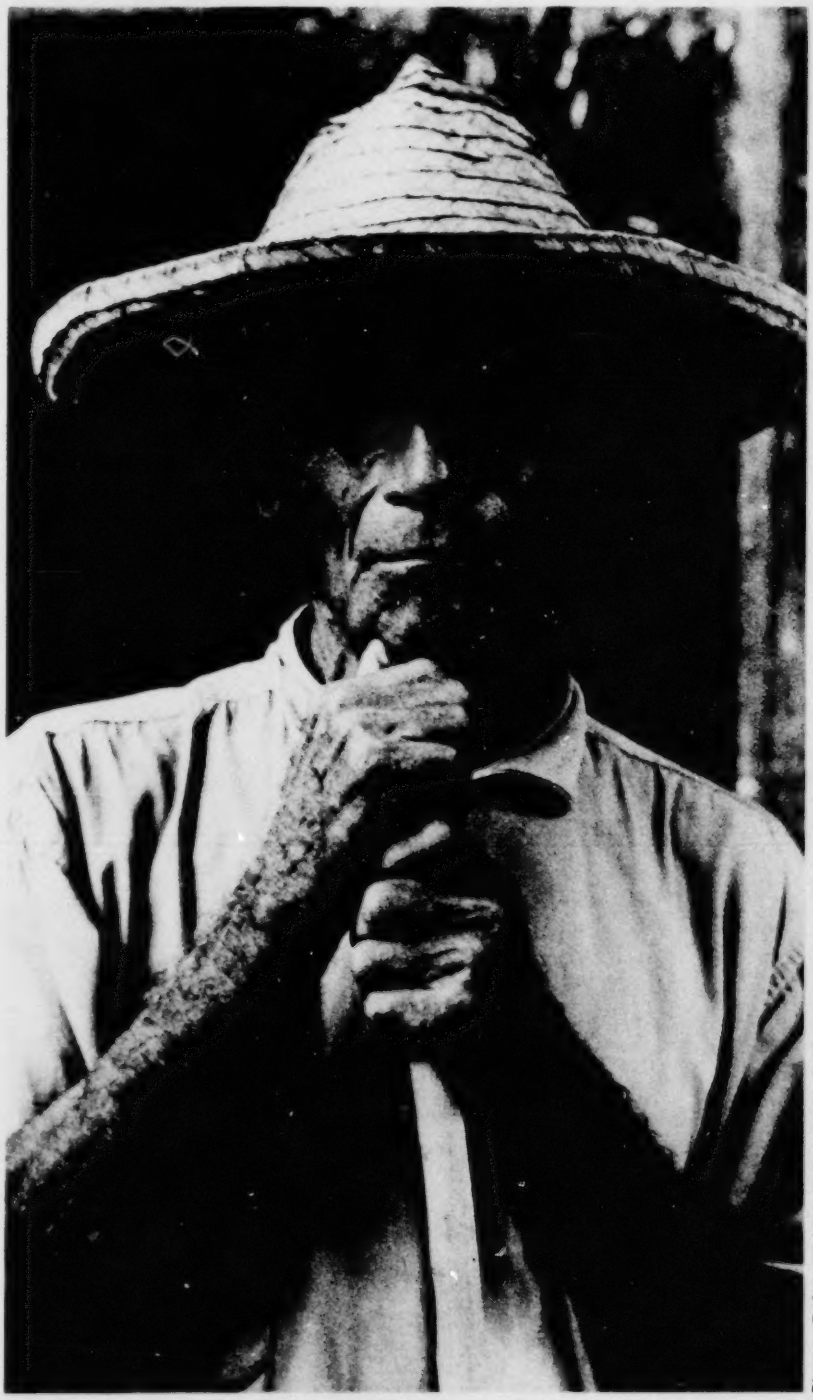

Photo: Refugee Living in Colombia, CWS.

"I thought that I was dreaming when we first arrived in this country. We could not believe that we could find loving and caring friends who were so different in appearance and background."

Rumanian Refugee
Name Withheld

contact with English can greatly speed the learning process. This should be augmented by more formal English instruction.

d. **Broadening contact within the community** — many associations and friendships can grow out of contacts made through the job. The sponsor has a responsibility to introduce the refugee to the new community and the new culture and lifestyle. This may include attending a local civic club or school board meeting etc. Your community should be aware of who this new member is and why the refugee needs their support, consideration and acceptance.

2. Donating Goods and Services

The key is to let people know exactly what is needed. The sponsor should make these needs known to other concerned community members. A pantry shower for example could be organized to gather food supplies and cooking utensils. Local merchants might be willing to assist with clothing by donation or at a reduced rate. If transportation is a problem, a car pool could be organized.

The important points in these suggestions are: 1) donated goods and services can reduce the direct financial burden of sponsorship; and 2) that the appeal for this assistance can increase the participation of more people.

3. Housing/Rent

Housing is a prime concern in sponsorship. The ideal would be an adequate apartment in the vicinity of the church, church members, or the individual sponsor. It is also helpful to provide housing near work, public transportation, and shopping places, which is not too expensive. This ideal combination often cannot be met and compromises may be necessary. For example many regions of the country are affected with housing shortages. Different housing arrangements can be found after the refugees have arrived and their needs are more fully determined. Again, the priority is shelter and adjustments can be made later.

If church-owned property is utilized for housing, experience indicates the wisdom of requesting rental payments from the refugees as soon as practical. This can avoid future misunderstandings and will foster an attitude of self-reliance. These rental payments can be channeled back into the church's refugee fund for further use.

4. Arrival

When the refugees arrive they will be tired, hungry, confused and probably a bit frightened. A small, informal welcome group can be helpful in reducing anxieties and will introduce the refugees to some members of the congregation with whom they will be having contact in the months ahead. It is extremely helpful if someone who speaks the refugees' language is present when they arrive, perhaps another refugee.

It is hard to anticipate what the refugees will be bringing with them. It is best to assume, however, that it will be very little. For this reason, the church may want to make an initial donation of clothing even though the proper sizes are not known. In winter it is advisable to bring clothing to the airport as refugees will often arrive with no coats or sweaters and inadequate footwear.

It will also be necessary to show/explain the operation of the various appliances, heating, etc., in the residence.

5. Post-Arrival

It is in the weeks and months following the arrival of the family that most of the legwork on the part of the sponsors occurs. It is very important to locate a person or persons who can assist you in translation if the refugee cannot speak English. As you assist the new arrivals in learning to function in American society, the complexity of American life becomes apparent. It is advisable for those members of the church most directly involved with the sponsorship to meet before the refugees arrive to determine what the refugees will have to know and who will help them learn it. Some subjects that should be covered, for example, are money, banking and credit systems, shopping in supermarkets, income taxes, school systems, learning English, public transportation, and job procedures. The best rule to remember is to go slow in the giving of new information so as not to overwhelm the refugees with too much information too soon.

6. Cultural Considerations

You should be sensitive and aware of the confusing and sometimes painful learning experiences that take place with the refugee as he/she becomes a new American. Let the person grow and develop on their own terms even though this might at times seem strange or different to you. As a sponsor you must not be a parent but a friend who cares, loves and tries to understand that this person has arrived in the United States from a different culture with different learning experiences. Many sponsors share stories of how much the refugees have taught them about the history and way of life of a part of the world they knew little about in the past.

VIII. SPONSORSHIP: WHAT WILL IT COST?

This is a fair question, on the other hand, if the sponsorship is a face-to-face ministry, and a faithful response to the church's bidding to welcome the stranger, monetary costs may not be the main issue. However, each sponsoring congregation should think through a financial plan in terms of both principles and specifics.

The Federal Government by acts of Congress has designated a pool of funds to help the refugee in reaching some reasonable degree of productivity and self-support. This money is delivered to an eligible refugee through public assistance or welfare in each state; in many states that means through your local human resources offices. It is inappropriate to label the refugee using public funds all the stereotypic long-term dependence images often given the so-called "welfare recipient." As a guideline, use of public assistance must be decided upon on a per case basis.

Another factor to keep in mind is a cultural dynamic which many refugees bring to this country which views financial help as creating an extraordinary level of obligation to repay debts. A congregation pledging to fully support a refugee family until they are self-sufficient (possibly implying that "We mustn't let them get into the welfare system") may unwittingly drive an emotional-cultural wedge into the sponsor-refugee relationship even hindering its growth into friendship. It is

"Working on an ecumenical basis has really been the answer."
Refugee Sponsor in San Francisco

always helpful to discuss sponsorship experiences with a former sponsor. Your refugee officer or sponsorship developers can help you locate a former sponsor in your area.

In undertaking a sponsorship, each congregation must decide the proportion of total maintenance costs it is able to undertake and for how long. Factors which affect that decision may include the degree of functional English language skills within the family group and the basic employability of the refugee family head or others in the family. While expectations and hopes of employability may be genuine (and help in locating jobs may be excellent) the labor market is one final determinant, another may be the basic motivation and/or capacity of the refugee bread winner.

Remember, the first resource in refugee resettlement in your church is you. Initial financial costs which you can provide are an important part of Christian caring and concern. Your assistance through helping find jobs, enrolling children in schools, etc. is invaluable. Increasingly, the second resource to American resettlement has become based upon an interactive partnership between the public and private sectors, each providing some of the resources and sharing the costs.

IX. CWS FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SPONSORSHIP

FUNDING FROM CWS TO MEMBER DENOMINATIONS*

1. Sponsorship Start-Up Costs — Approximately two weeks after arrival of the sponsored refugee, CWS will mail a check made out jointly to the sponsor and refugee head of household in the amount of $120 per person in the family. This is a transitional allowance, to be used toward initial reception and housing costs, or for future needs as determined by the sponsor and refugee head of household. While some use it immediately, other sponsors have deliberately put it into a savings bank and let it be a "nest egg" for the future. For a refugee family who may have experienced *total* loss, the psychological value of such an action may be far larger than the actual deposit.

2. Emergency Assistance — For medical or dental needs not covered under Medicaid a $325 dental and $325 medical grant per person. This is provided through each denominational resettlement office. But as they move into the labor market and have initial incomes, they usually are ineligible for federal financial assistance. They may also lose eligibility for Medicaid and yet may have no health insurance as such. This Church World Service "back-up" then becomes critical.

3. Housing — For a family of 7 or more persons (a family size where purchase may often be a better route than rentals over time), CWS will provide a $1,000 grant toward the cost of a house. Requests will be considered up to three months after purchase upon presentation of evidence of purchase. This is dependent upon the refugee(s)' being employed.

4. Car Purchase — For a family unit, CWS will allow up to $750 grant for the purchase of a car where it is clearly demonstrated that purchase will contribute to employability. Application must be made within 90 days of purchase.

*Jan. 1, 1980

X. REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT MODELS

What is the difference between the various VOLAG sponsorship models or approaches? There are several models of sponsorship: individual, institution, case work, and congregation. Each VOLAG approaches resettlement with a certain style and outline. The goal of self-sufficiency remains the same.

International Rescue Committee, a non-sectarian organization, for example, does not solicit sponsors but carries out resettlement work on a casework method based on its 12 regional offices, staffed with resettlement caseworkers.

The congregational model of refugee resettlement is often viewed as one of the strongest means of helping the refugee adapt to the new community. Successful resettlement is often epitomized by churches which provide a caring and loving environment for the refugee. The congregation usually organizes itself by committees to assist in the short and long term needs of the refugee. The refugee does not become dependent on a single individual but rather together with the congregation shares the emotional and financial costs of this process.

XI. ORGANIZING A CONGREGATION: WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

Participation by the church begins with a small group of responsible people which plans and executes the effective resettlement of a refugee family. A suggested organization plan involves two groups: a core committee and support group.

1. The core committee of 5 or 6 people coordinate and supervise sponsorship activities and act as a primary personal contact with the refugee family. They assume responsibility for health care, social services and contacts with the denomination officer.

2. The support group is a larger group that would organize themselves around the service of providing initial housing (either separate or shared) and a stock of food (chosen with some degree of cultural and style sensitivity).

Other needs to be considered include:

A family clothing plan, plus some basic furnishings.

Financial backup, if not outright support, until some degree of earning is established.

Plans for employment, if applicable, and also for school as well as English acquisition by everybody.

Transportation.

Medical care.

XII. A MEANINGFUL RESETTLEMENT OFFER TODAY

In virtually every community there is an amazing number of potential resources for assistance that may be needed during a sponsorship. You may need to utilize a combination of church, local, state and federal resources in your sponsorship offer. Many resources can be found within your church. But through friendships, business, professional and social contacts throughout the community, the circle widens dramatically. Organizations and persons outside the church may be able to respond in a specific and sometimes crucial way when presented with the situation and need.

There are a surprising number of resources such as local educational and skills training programs, health services

"When I came to this country, my sponsors got a good place for me to live. They make me feel this is my home. I am well satisfied by them."

Yemane Berhe
Ethiopia Refugee

Photo: Refugee Child from Guatemalan Earthquake, CWS

and day care centers that may be tapped when creative and sensitive people set themselves to the task of responding to human need. You need to locate HEW-funded employment and language training projects in your community. In particular Title XX Social Service Programs and HEW Special Projects for Refugees.

(1) Title XX of the Social Security Act — Social Services Programs for individuals and families (including, in many states, refugees), requires states to engage in a public planning process so that citizens can help to decide the social services that should be available. From this process, each State produces an annual services plan as the basis upon which State and Federal funds will be spent. Federal funds are matched with state funds. To know if your state offers Title XX Social Services for refugees, contact the State Office of Human Resources (Welfare) in the state capitol.

(2) For Indochinese refugees, HEW awards grants to various agencies in refugee-impacted areas for special projects in English language and employment services and for special projects in mental health services. For the availability of such programs, contact your regional HEW office director. (See Federal government listing in your state capitol directory)

Councils of churches, denominational networks, local church and community support are needed to make refugee sponsorship work. Underutilized and untapped local and state resources need to be explored in each community. Some of these resources may include: the offices of state and local Chambers of Commerce, local/state apartment referral associations, YMCA-YWCA, local health care centers and public school systems. Specifically, a church sponsorship can set up a small planning or project group. You will need doers, thinkers and people who know their community resources and you will need one or two really "good listeners" who can be comfortable giving a sense of caring to a person from a different culture and maybe without English skills.

Photo: Refugee Child in Hong Kong, CWS.

XIII. THE KEY RESETTLEMENT ASSET

In terms of the ultimate sponsorship goal of both self-sufficiency and independence, an extremely important factor is simply people — people who show love and concern, people to turn to in times of sadness, people with whom to share happiness and joy — in short, people who help the newcomer become part of the community. The emotional needs of a refugee are no less significant than the physical and material. Refugees have left their native communities, ways of life, friends and families far behind. This transition can be difficult and it may bring periods of depression.

Experience has shown that often the most difficult emotional adjustments (sometimes called "culture shock") come after basic-sufficiency has been achieved, often a period of six months to two years after arrival in the U.S. This is when the period making basic adjustments begins to subside and the refugees are confronted with the permanence of their expatriation. The resulting let-down can be very subtle and may show itself in seemingly unrelated ways such as impatience with the job situation, overall depression and lack of motivation, or the desire to move closer to friends or relatives. During this period a great deal of sensitive understanding is needed to give support and encouragement. If there are valid reasons for a refugee to move from the community of initial resettlement (job, family reunification, health, etc.) the sponsor will want to be understanding and helpful. Since there is no legal requirement in this regard, refugees are free to move about in the U.S. However, sponsors should help refugees to understand that if they do choose to move there will not usually be a follow-up sponsor for them in the new location.

XIV. APPROACHING A THEOLOGICAL/BIBLICAL STATMENT ON REFUGEE CONCERNS

"I was a stranger and you took me in." (Matthew 25.36)

In whatever education we undertake on the issue of ministry with refugees, we should begin by stressing that the church is viewed as a pilgrim church, its

"Before I had to learn to act gently, with dignity; now I have to make myself familiar with the hardships of labor. This is the way it is and I have been trying very hard to keep up with it, but I still find myself completely lost. It is also a great difficulty that we face daily."

Phan Lac Tiep, *a Vietnamese refugee now in California, wrote of his transfer to the United States*

peoples are refugees as with the flight of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. The refugee is a model for our own ecclesiology and understanding of our Christian existence. The first question to ask, therefore, is "What must the church become in order to warrant the name of 'church of Jesus Christ,' the Son of Man who had nowhere to lay his head?"

A theological statement of our involvement and assistance to refugees encompasses a number of areas of concern. It should not be forgotten that sponsorship is the present key to acceptance and resettlement of refugees. The following themes, and others as well, might be developed to create a theological response to the idea that "If the refugees receive help, they receive it from us." Ultimately, in the face of people's fear and anxieties over the lack of sustainable resources, the church should proclaim the love of God for, in the words of Eric Fromm, it is love alone which is the only "self-renewing resource." Seven areas, as they relate to our involvement with the refugee, are briefly discussed: ecumenism, hospitality, pilgrim, homelessness, liberation, peace and justice.

Ecumenism — Here reference is made to the unity of mankind of oikomene meaning "one earth." This is found in the Gospel according to St. John.

Hospitality — This is a very rich and deep theme in the Old and New Testaments. We are reminded of the scenes of Abraham at the oak of Namre (Genesis 18), of Lot at his door in Sodom (Genesis 19), of Jesus in the homes of Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:31), Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-9), and Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38), of the two men meeting the risen Lord on the road to Ammaus (Luke 24) — all bring the theme of hospitality to mind. The New Testament correspondences give abundant witness to the hospitality expected and experienced by the apostles in the course of their missionary preaching and travel.

Pilgrim — The idea of Christian life as one of journey, sojourning, and walking; it is seen from the flight of Abraham to the present day. Matthew's Gospel barely gets underway but what we hear of the flight into Egypt. The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head (Matthew 8:20) and those who follow him are, according to the Letter to the Hebrews "the wandering people of God."

Homelessness — The letter to the Hebrews sets the Kingdom of God far away from our "homeland," even for those who have died, and reminds Christians that they "have no abiding city, but seek a city which is to come." (Hebrew 13:14).

Liberation — With the Exodus from Egypt to the return of the exiles from Babylon to Jesus' resurrection from the chains of death and all that that means for the Christian believer, the theme of liberation, release, freedom, and salvation is traced through the Bible. In his Nazareth sermon, Jesus made liberation programmatic from his own ministry (Luke 4:14-21; c.f. Isaiah 61:1-3). Liberation requires the establishment of both peace and justice.

Peace — Luke depicts the purpose of God's act in sending Jesus as Saviour to be the establishment of "peace on earth." (Luke 2:14) Human dislocation results principally from the lack of wholeness and peace with the economic, political, and social structures of this earth. Ministry to refugees must include a concern to establish world peace.

Justice — Justice, translated in the Jerusalem Bible as "integrity," means the wholeness of the created order because all the integral parts are righted in relationship with each other. Thus, justice is the opposite of aberration and estrangement. When justice reigns, all of God's children will be reconciled to each other because no one any longer regards them from a human point of view (2 Corinthians 5:16), no longer "strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." (Ephesians 2:19)

Conclusion

The Christian concepts of love, justice, and help are central to the on-going concern for refugee assistance. The wholeness of humanity, man's persecution, flight and his quest for freedom peace and justice are Christ's teachings and remain our responsibility to our religious and secular community. In reaching those who have no home, who have lost family and friends and all sense of stability and love, we are touching Christ according to his teachings. "If you have done it to the least of these, brother, you have done it to me." Also, we have a responsibility to help those who need help.

XV. OUR FUTURE WORK

CWS is committed to assisting refugees and helping to change conditions that have created refugees around the world. As the relief and development arm of the National Council of Churches, Church World Service will continue to encourage and implement wide ranging policies of self-help and development in the countries it works in.

As a national voluntary agency with a long history of refugee resettlement work, Church World Service will continue to impact and support national legislation to assist the homeless and will advocate for support for the world's homeless. We are deeply concerned with the issue of equity of acceptance and resettlement opportunities in their refugee resettlement work. We will assist all refugees with equal resources, concern and opportunities from wherever the refugee may come.

Resettlement to the United States is not always the best solution for many refugee situations but foreign development assistance may offer broader and better answers to some of the provoking political economic and conditions that creating refugees today.

Finally, your generous financial support to your church, denomination or Church World Service will enable us to carry out our work of ministry to the homeless.

XVI. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SPONSORSHIP

1. How do we know the availability or needs of a particular refugee group?

- Contact your denominational resettlement office or Church World Service, Information Office (212) 870-3152

2. How long will it take for a refugee we sponsor to arrive?

- This can vary according to group, conditions of the region and program differences. Your offer of sponsorship assures a refugee in a camp of a home here. Circumstances which create delays may include: (a) program movement and logistic problems. In the Indochina program, for example we have been dependent upon the availability of

commercial airline seats and complicated by medical holds due to the health conditions in the camp. An ill parent or child for example, may delay movement for two months for an entire family. Today family reunifications from Indochina are given entrance priority. Refugees joining family members who arrive in 1975 or later are thus earmarked to those related geographic locales. Sponsors are then needed for those areas. Over 80 percent of the refugees today are family reunification cases—which means 10 VOLAGS are sharing 20 percent of the available free cases.

3. What happens if problems arise in the resettlement process after the refugee arrives?

- Keep cool. Think out the problems and use the translation services of someone who speaks the language. Attempt to talk out the problem with the sponsoring group and minister; contact another sponsor; or contact your denominational resettlement office.

4. What about encouraging the refugee to attend church?

- After a period of initial rest and introduction, you may want to include the refugee in church activities but realize that the decision to attend and actually participate in religious services must be the conscious decision of the refugee.

5. What about use of welfare in the resettlement process?

- Welfare traditionally has raised red flags from critics of all newcomers. This is historically based in our laws defining people who make use of public assistance as public charges. As a sponsor you must inform and evaluate with the refugee their needs and your resources. Each case must be decided individually but it is hoped that the sponsoring congregation could absorb these costs. There are, of course, extenuating circumstances — medical costs, for example.

6. How do we process a request for a family reunification for an Indochinese family we have sponsored or a refugee that has located or wishes to bring a member of his immediate family to this country to join him/her?

- Contact your denominational resettlement officer for eligibility, and process requirements.

7. What if unexpected medical emergency expenses arise — what do I do?

- Contact your denominational resettlement office. Funds exist for these problems.

8. The refugee family our church sponsored six months ago told us they plan to move next week. Where did we go wrong?

- Nowhere. You offered the opportunity of a new life to a family to become independent and mobile on their own terms. Part of the history of refugee resettlement in this country is the concentrating/clustering phenomena of newcomers wanting to live in their own communities.

9. When do we really let go?

- As a friend you will see the confidence and personal growth in the refugee and will decide this "letting go" time on your own shared terms. The process is repeated again by many churches in a short period of time after they feel the refugee "can make it alone."

10. What about the health conditions of the refugee entering?

- No refugee can enter this country unless he/she passes an entrance medical exam abroad which certifies that they are free of any communicative disease. We do suggest that for the refugee's own welfare they receive a medical exam within the first two weeks of arrival in your community.

Photo: Refugee Children in Malaysia, CWS.

HOW TO ORTAIN INFORMATION ON REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

Church World Service coordinates the resettlement programs of its member denominations. Denominational resettlement officers obtain sponsorships through their individual churches. If you are considering sponsoring a refugee or have any questions concerning sponsorship of a refugee, you may contact: (1) your local church/pastor; (2) your local or state council of churches; (3) denominational resettlement officers; (4) CWS New York and Los Angeles offices.

Church World Service – NY
475 Riverside Drive, Room 666
New York, NY 10115
(212) 870-2164

Church World Service – LA
5250 Santa Monica Blvd., Ste. 311
Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213) 666-2708

You may call CWS – NY-LA Collect

REFUGEE OFFICER CONTACT LIST

American Baptist Churches
Mr. Matthew Giuffrida
Valley Forge, PA 19481
(215) 768-2425

Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
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(317) 353-1491

Christian Reformed Church
Mr. John de Haan and
Mr. Neil Molenaar
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Church of the Brethren
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World Ministries Commission
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Presbyterian Church/US
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Reformed Church in America
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(212) 870-3073

Southern Baptist Convention
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United Church of Christ
Ms. Elfriede Kohl
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New York, NY 10115
(212) 870-2701

United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.
Rev. William DuVal and
Ms. Shirley Nichols
475 Riverside Drive, Room 1268
New York, NY 10115
(212) 870-2465 or 2467

United Methodist Committee on Relief – Ms. Lilia Fernandez
475 Riverside Drive, Room 1470
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